

Introduction to Improvising

(Making stuff up!)

Being asked to make something up on the spot can be a pretty scary task. These ideas will hopefully make it easier and get you well on your way to creating your own music.

Below are a few things to think about whilst trying this out.

- ☑ **Do not be worried about making mistakes** (there are no mistakes in improvising)
- ☑ **It doesn't have to be complicated** (the simple things are sometimes the best)
- ☑ **Have an open mind to lots of ideas** (this helps you be creative)
- ☑ **Be yourself** (play the things you like the sound of, not what someone told you to play)

Session 1

Changing rhythms

Below we have the basic rock beat. What can we do to change this beat a little? You'll see a couple of examples on how we can change and improvise something new below.

1. Basic Rock Beat



2. Rock Beat Variation



3. Rock Beat Variation



Now you've got an idea of what you can change have a go at doing some by yourself, this is where you start properly improvising!
Have fun with it!

Session 2

Using different drums and dynamics (volume)



Here is one of our rock beat variations from the last session. We can change other things rather than the rhythm such as playing different cymbals or drums and changing the dynamics.



Here you can see we have changed the hi hat notes to ride cymbals. We have also changed the first snare drum note to the floor tom and inserted some dynamics. Below is a list of dynamics and their meanings.

pp	piannissimo	very soft
p	piano	soft
mp	mezzo piano	medium soft
mf	mezzo forte	medium loud
f	forte	loud
ff	fortissimo	very loud

Session 3

Rudiments

Rudiments are a very important part about learning drums. They give us the tools to improvise our own grooves and fills.

Below is a rudiment called the Paradiddle. We can use this rudiment to improvise by changing the pattern slightly. Below are two examples.

1. Paradiddle

2 R L R R L R L L



2. Paradiddle variations

3 R L R R R R L L



4 R R L L R L L R



We can also use these on different drums using dynamics and different rhythms.

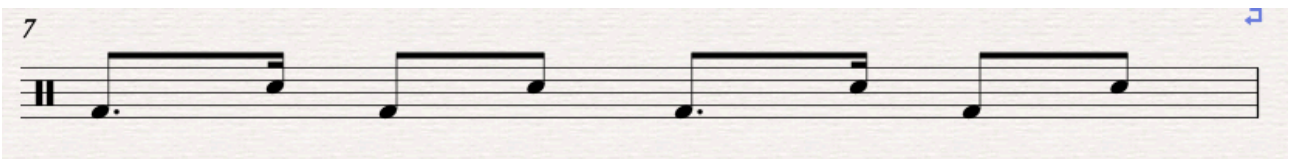
5 R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L



Session 4

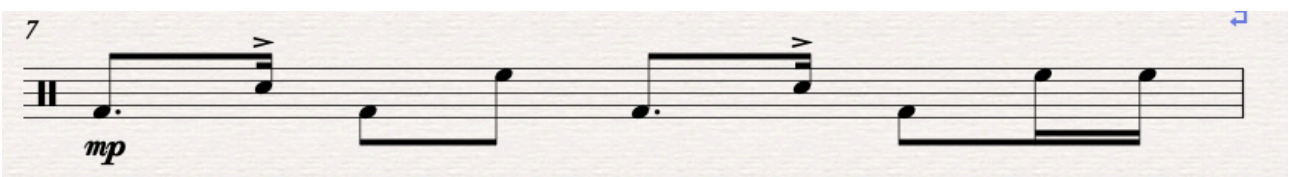
Songs you like

One of the best ways to get ideas for improvising is by stealing (don't worry you won't get in trouble) other musicians grooves or fills and make them your own. Below is the drum beat from Shape of You by Ed Sheeran.



We can now use all of the idea's we have learnt in our previous sessions to change this and make it our own, such as...

1. Dynamics
2. Different rhythm
3. Changing the drums used



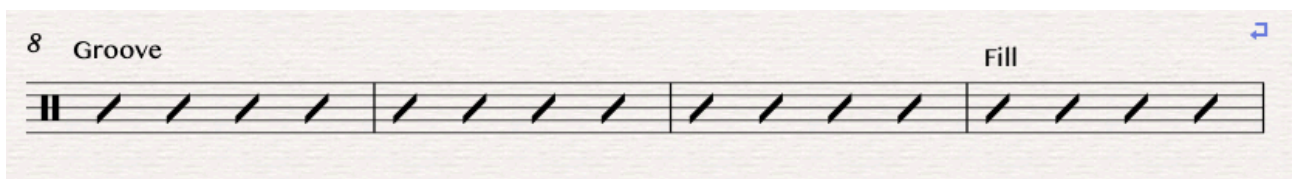
We can also use something called accents (the little triangles on top of the snare drum notes) They are used when certain notes need to be louder (accented) than other notes.

Session 5

Now its your turn

We've been through a few different approaches to improvising in these sessions, its now your turn (don't worry, you'll do great!)

What I'd like you to do is come up with a groove which lasts for three bars with one bar of fill at the end. It doesn't have to be super complicated, just experiment with some idea's.



Those slashes are called time slashes. They mean you can improvise so have a go at some of the following things...

- **Stealing idea's from songs you like** (groove and fills)
- **Use rudiments to your advantage** (there are lots so choose some you like)
- **Change the dynamics**
- **Accent different parts to change the sound**
- **Don't worry if what you come up with is simple** (that can be the best thing sometimes!)